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Comments on California HSS Framework - Chapter 10 Grade Six

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Preamble: In the new globalized world, it is important that our children learn about the world free from the lingering prejudices of a by-gone era of the British/Christian Missionary dominated colonial rule that attempted to anglicize and Christianize the masses in countries under the British Empire.

Anglicisation is explained in Wikipedia as follows: "...anglicisation was an important objective of the English crown ... in some sectors of society under the British Empire.[4][5]"

The Reference [4] is stated as follows:

[4] Radhakamal Mukerjee, A history of Indian civilization, Volume 2 - Page 411 1958

"For some decades it appeared that the dissemination of Western learning would bring about a complete social anglicisation and wholesale conversion of the people to Christianity in Bengal. But a cultural counter-movement soon started ..."

Another objective of the colonial rule was to conceal and obscure the record of world history that might reveal that India was a civilized society before the British came and disparage or obstruct any information that might confirm such facts.

Sixty five years after the British rule ended in India, American textbooks still continue shades of those prejudices. In the new globalized world, it is important that American textbooks present an even handed view of the history that neither glorifies any country or civilization, nor disparages any. The following comments are an attempt to bring to light such prejudices and try to present a more balanced view.

p 211 line 794: describe the physical features of the Indus and Ganges river systems in India.

Comment (1): Our textbooks should not continue the old British colonial, anglicised spellings of people, places, rivers, etc. In the new globalized world, it is important that children learn the correct names of people, places, rivers, etc. as, in the context of Indian sub-continent, people of India and Pakistan call them. Therefore, **change** Indus to Sindh, and Ganges to Ganga. Make similar changes throughout the book.

p 210 line 784-788: *How did the environment influence the emergence and decline of the Harappa civilization? The earliest civilization, known as Harappan civilization after one of its cities, was centered in the Indus River valley, though its cultural style spread widely from present-day Afghanistan to the upper Ganga plain (Ganges River). The Indus River and its tributaries, along with Saraswati (or Sarasvati) River, flow from the Himalaya mountains southward across the plain now called the Punjab, fan out into a delta, and pour into the Arabian Sea. The river valley was much larger than either Mesopotamia or Egypt, and its soil was very rich.*

Comment (2) Harappa is a misnomer for the civilization. While other civilizations are known by their largest land mass (Mesopotamia and Egypt) Harappa connotes a small, now forgotten city and deprives the Indian sub-continent of recognition of the large tract of civilized area it had developed. As the later part of the paragraph explains, it was 'Sindh-Saraswati' civilization. Therefore the moniker of 'Harappan' should be dropped and replaced by 'Sindh-Saraswati' civilization throughout the book.

Change to: How did the environment influence the emergence and decline of the Sindh-Saraswati civilization? It was centered in the Sindh and Saraswati River valleys, though its cultural style spread widely from present-day Afghanistan to the upper Ganga plain. The Sindh River and its tributaries, along with Saraswati (or Sarasvati) River, flow from the Himalaya mountains southward across the

plain now called the Punjab, fan out into a delta, and pour into the Arabian Sea. The land mass of Sindh-Saraswati river valleys civilization was much larger than either Mesopotamia or Egypt, and its soil was very rich.

p 210 line 775: *How did the environment influence the emergence and decline of the Harappa civilization?*

Comment (3) Change to: How did the environment influence the emergence and decline of the Sindh-Saraswati civilization?

This change needs to be made at numerous places in the following pages.

p 211 line 811-812: *A flourishing urban civilization developed in India from as early as 3300 BCE along the Indus River.*

Comment (4) Change to: A flourishing urban civilization developed in India from as early as 3300 BCE along the Sindh and Saraswati River valleys.

p 212 line 815-818: *The Harappan civilization steadily declined ... including the drying up of the Saraswati River around 2000 BCE.*

Comment (5) change to: *The Sindh-Saraswati civilization steadily declined ... including the drying up of the Saraswati River around 2000 BCE.*

p 212 line 821-824 *people speaking Indic languages, which are part of the larger Indo-European family of languages, entered South Asia, probably by way of Iran. Gradually, Indic languages, including Sanskrit, spread across northern India.*

Comment (6) This British colonial/Christian missionary inspired theory has been discredited that people from outside the ancient Indian subcontinent (including the present day Pakistan and parts of Afghanistan) entered India by way of Iran.

Change to: people along the Sindh and Saraswati River valleys were speaking Indic languages, which are part of the larger Indo-European family of languages. Gradually, Indic languages, including Sanskrit, spread across northern India.

p 188 line 317,318 *Archaeological evidence indicates that in the Middle East, and probably Egypt, foraging bands settled near stands of edible grasses, the genetic ancestors of wheat and other grains. People began deliberately to sow plants that had favorable qualities, for example, varieties that were large, tasty, and easy to cook. In this way, they gradually domesticated those plants.*

Comment (7): As the text on p 211 line 811-812 says, archaeological evidence has well established that "A flourishing urban civilization developed in India from as early as 3300 BCE". Also p 210 line 788 says "The river valley was much larger than either Mesopotamia or Egypt, and its soil was very rich." So why India is excluded on p 188, line 317? **Change to:** Archaeological evidence indicates that in the Middle East, and probably Egypt and India, foraging bands settled near stands of edible grasses, the genetic ancestors of wheat and other grains. People began deliberately to sow plants that had favorable qualities, for example, varieties that were large, tasty, and easy to cook. In this way, they gradually domesticated those plants.

p190 line 364, 365 and page 191 line 383,384

How did civilizations, complex urban societies, develop in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Kush?

Comment (8): Egypt and Kush are both in Africa. Why should students learn two ancient civilizations of Africa, and not any of Asia, the largest continent on earth? Our children should not be taught about the ancient world civilizations emphasizing one country, or continent, while de-emphasizing another country, or continent. **Change to:** How did civilizations, complex urban societies, develop in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India?

Note: This change would require replacing text devoted to Kush with equivalent text for India.

p192 line 395,396 *Kush, a civilization in the upper Nile River region south of Egypt emerged in the second millennium BCE.*

Comment (9) Refer to p 211 line 811-812: "A flourishing urban civilization developed in India from as early as 3300 BCE". Indian civilization is much older and it will provide students a broader perspective of development of civilizations across different continents. Therefore, Indian civilization deserves a detailed discussion (in place of Kush).

p192 line 409 Teachers guide students through the development of each of these three civilizations separately, while frequently pointing out connections, similarities, and differences among the civilizations (and also the Harappa civilization along the Indus River and Chinese civilization along the Huang He [Yellow] River).

Comment (10): Why are Indian and Chinese civilizations mentioned as parenthetical material? And why again 'Harappa' used when all other civilizations are identified with their country of origin, or geographical area, not the name of a small town? **Change to:** Teachers guide students through the development of each of these three civilizations: Mesopotamia, Egypt and India, while frequently pointing out connections, similarities, and differences among these civilizations and with the Chinese civilization along the Huang He (Yellow) River.

p199 line 531-533 Students may create maps showing the trade routes and products that circulated among Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, Anatolia, Persia, and South Asia,...

Comment (11): Logically, since Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, Anatolia, Persia are ancient geographical areas, it would make sense to mention ancient Northwest India in this series (rather than South Asia, which is a conglomeration of 10 countries now and has no reference in ancient world, or even modern world before 1970's). OR, if one wants to refer to broader geographical areas, then write: Africa, Middle East and South Asia.

p 199 line 536-537 The teacher transitions to the study of African civilization of Kush with this question: What environmental factors helped the Kush civilization grow?

Comment (12): As explained above in comments 8, 9, 10, replace Kush with Sindh-Saraswati.

Change to: The teacher transitions to the study of Indian civilization with this question: What environmental factors helped the Sindh-Saraswati civilization grow?

Also need to Change the text about Kush (from line 539 to line 569) with equivalent text about India.

We hope these comments would be helpful in guiding the HSS framework and textbooks to present a fair and balanced view of the history of Sindh-Saraswati civilization of North India.

Sincerely,

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